

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 087095
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DRAFTED BY EA/PHL:BAFLECK;JSARTORIUS:EBS
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-----115461 050908Z /15
R 050157Z APR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MANILA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ETRD, RP

SUBJECT: WEEKLY STATUS REPORT - PHILIPPINES

TO: EA - MR. HOLBROOKE

FROM: EA/PHL - BENJAMIN A. FLECK

1. AQUINO VIDEOTAPE RECEIVED (LOU)

EA/PHL HAS RECEIVED FROM EMBASSY MANILA A VIDEOTAPE OF
AQUINO'S MARCH 10 TELEVISION INTERVIEW. WE ARE MAKING
ARRANGEMENTS TO HAVE IT SHOWN IN THE EA CONFERENCE ROOM
TO FIT YOUR SCHEDULE.

2. ELECTION PROTEST DEMONSTRATION (LOU)

SY HAS INFORMED US THAT THE ANTI-MARTIAL LAW ALLIANCE AND
THE MOVEMENT FOR A FREE PHILIPPINES ARE JOINTLY PLANNING
TO HOLD A DEMONSTRATION IN FRONT OF THE PHILIPPINE EMBASSY
ON APRIL 5 FROM 4 TO 6:30 P.M. IN PROTEST AGAINST ALLEGED
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RIGGING OF THE PHILIPPINE ELECTION. LAW ENFORCEMENT AGEN-
CIES HAVE BEEN ALERTED.

3. POSSIBLE TROPICAL PRODUCTS AGREEMENT - TIME IS
RUNNING OUT (LOU)

FOR SOME TIME THE GOP HAS BEEN INTERESTED, BUT EQUIVO-

CATED OVER ENTERING TRADE NEGOTIATIONS UNDER THE MTN, MOST PARTICULARLY FOR A TROPICAL PRODUCTS (TP) AGREEMENT, WHICH WOULD RESOLVE SEVERAL OUTSTANDING BILATERAL ISSUES INCLUDING THE PHILIPPINES' DESIRE TO OBTAIN US TARIFF REDUCTIONS FOR COCONUT OIL AND PHILIPPINE MAHOGANY PLYWOOD. A KEY OBSTACLE TO NEGOTIATIONS HAS BEEN A COMMON ASEAN (AS PART OF A GENERAL LDC) POSITION AGAINST MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. HOPEFULLY, THE ASEAN STANCE WOULD HAVE CHANGED DURING, OR SHORTLY AFTER A LATE MARCH-EARLY APRIL MEETING OF ASEAN SENIOR TRADE OFFICIALS IN SINGAPORE. HOWEVER, AT GOP BEHEST, THIS MEETING (AND AN IMMEDIATE FOLLOW-ON WITH US TRADE OFFICIALS) HAS NOW BEEN POSTPONED TO APRIL 19-20.

THIS DELAY NOTWITHSTANDING, EMBASSY MANILA BELIEVES THAT THE GOP HAS DECIDED TO ENTER SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS ON A TP (AND PRESUMABLY THE BROADER ISSUES RAISED IN THE MTN CONTEXT AS WELL). APART FROM ITS DETERMINATION TO REMAIN IN GOOD STANDING AS A LOYAL MEMBER OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND A COOPERATIVE PARTNER IN ASEAN, MANILA FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS, INCLUDING THE ELECTIONS, HAS BEEN HAVING TROUBLE PUTTING TOGETHER A NEGOTIATING POSITION. WHILE WE ARE AWAITING A FORMAL REQUEST, THE GOP REPORTEDLY WOULD NOW LIKE TO HOLD BILATERAL TALKS IN MANILA APRIL 24-26, COVERING BOTH THE TP AND PHILIPPINE RESPONSES TO OUR TABLED TRADE REQUESTS.

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COMMENT: THERE IS A SERIOUS QUESTION, HOWEVER, WHETHER AT THIS LATE DATE SUFFICIENT TIME REMAINS FOR A TP TO BE CONCLUDED. EMBASSY MANILA RECENTLY AGAIN STRESSED TO THE GOP OUR GENEVA MTN DELEGATION'S BELIEF THAT, CON-

SIDERING THE NUMBER OF ISSUES THAT MUST BE RESOLVED IN THE MTN PRIOR TO JULY 15, TP NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO MAY. VANCE

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